

THE LOYALTY DEMANDED

BY THE

PRESENT CRISIS.

PHILADELPHIA:

HENRY B. ASHMEAD, BOOK AND JOB PRINTER,

Nos. 1102 AND 1104 SANSON STREET.

1864. .

THE LOYALTY DEMANDED

BY THE

PRESENT CRISIS.

BY REV. JACOB COOPER.

109045

It is proposed in this paper to consider the sentiments which a truly loyal man should entertain toward those who are now called of God to exercise authority over the nation. This will involve a review of the difficulties which beset the Administration at its beginning, and the necessities growing out of the war which the rebellion has forced upon our people. And, as no administration has ever before had to grapple with such tremendous opposition, or try so many hitherto untrodden paths of action, none have deserved so much lenity from loyal men for mistakes in judgment, or measures of questionable legality.

It will be pertinent to the subject to dissect the character of those pretended patriots who, while proclaiming at the street corners and along the highways, that they are just as good Union men as anybody, yet, by their every act and word show their animus to be treasonable, and their influence with the enemies of our country. And, as there are connected with these, in effect if not in purpose, numerous croakers and birds of ill omen, who despair of the Republic, and magnify temporary advantages gained by the secessionists; who villify every measure of the Government which was not enacted for their own special behoof; who predict the utter subversion of the Constitution when its enemies are punished; it is proposed to show that the efforts of such persons have a direct tendency to weaken the hands of Union men, and strengthen the enemy, and therefore, at this time, however allowable a certain licentiousness of speech may be in peace, are positively disloyal and wicked.

The foundation of all stable government is the sanction and blessing of God granted to rulers. For by Him kings reign and princes decree justice: and, therefore, as the established powers are ordained of God, those who on insufficient grounds resist

this ordinance, receive to themselves condemnation and misery, as the leaders of the present unholy insurrection are learning to their confusion. It is very true that a government may become oppressive by subverting the liberties which it was established to protect; that a magistrate may lead the people astray by first forsaking God, as did Saul; and thus both constitution and executive become a burden so heavy that the voice of the people, as a voice from heaven, cries out against the oppression, and the yoke is justly shaken off. But in order to justify such action the perversion must be unquestionable, and the tyranny intolerable. The senseless murmurs of a restless and ambitious faction, or the disappointed hopes of shelved politicians, are not to be regarded. For these are usually nothing but the evidence that their occupation of making silver shrines for themselves is gone, and their uproarious cries are only the expression of selfishness, but do not in the least atone for the crime of rebellion, or compensate for the miseries of a popular uprising. For governments, however well administered by fallible human agents, and over such creatures, can only be a system of compensations, effected by the surrender of individual preferences for the common good; and hence it follows, from the nature of the case, that instances must occur wherein grievances are felt, and occasions made for selfish complaining. And while such complaining is counter to the spirit and needs of civil society, it is also unreasonable because subversive of the common good, and contrary to the divine ordinance, which requires submission. Nor should the loyalty of the subject be expressed by a formal submission to authority, an outward obedience, as if extorted by fear; but a hearty support, a cordial acquiescence in those measures which the public welfare demands through personal sacrifice. This is not all, the true patriot honors the ruler as such, though differing from him in political views, because he is the visible representation of the divine power in the state. Even when the character of the magistrate be such that a good man cannot approve of it, still, while the person cannot be respected, the office must be honored and obeyed. This is without doubt the true notion of loyalty—a sentiment far too little regarded in our country since partisan rancor ran so high near the close of Washington's presidential term, and, from the absence of which, our rulers have been deprived of that moral support which is imperatively necessary to the successful working of governments when the purposes of the executive are thoroughly honest. As a people, we have been nearly destitute of that romantic devotion to the persons of our magistrates which has so often been manifested in other countries; and, while it is the

highest earthly reward, is one of the firmest securities that the confidence bestowed will not be betrayed. It by no means follows that we must approve of everything which the constituted powers can do in order to be loyal citizens. The divine right of kings to tyrannize was a doctrine never palatable on this side of the Atlantic, and is becoming less so generally on the other. Our danger has been in the opposite extreme, and our course in this respect has been to drive the better class of men from our political arena, and take as a *dernier resort* those second or third-rate politicians, who, but too well satisfied to feed at the public expense, did not shrink from the abuse and dishonor cast by the opposite faction, but which are so abhorrent to a pure-minded, conscientious man. It is our privilege to learn wisdom from the results of our own errors; and it is sincerely to be hoped that henceforth we will avoid that mistaken policy to which we, in common with all democracies, are prone.

A hearty loyalty on the part of the people toward their rulers being a christian virtue, as well as a necessary accompaniment of all stable government, it follows that this is the more indispensable when the existence of the state is threatened. For though in a time of profound quiet, when no unusual expedients must be resorted to in order to maintain the supremacy of the government, it may be admissible, even necessary, to scrutinize closely the conduct of rulers, and call them to strict account for doubtful measures, so that their improper actions may be corrected; yet, when their overthrow is threatened by unlawful opposition, we should not, unless usurpation be unmistakably their object, withdraw our moral support. For it then becomes our highest earthly duty to rally without delay to their aid, and strike down the foe who endeavors to destroy our liberty in the person of our lawfully constituted ruler. And here let a common and fatal error be noted. Many hold that they can support the Government of the United States without supporting the Administration; that they can be loyal to the Constitution while acknowledging no allegiance to those who have been elected in precise conformity with its provisions. That is, a man can be loyal to the Constitution while utterly disregarding its most important provisions; can be obedient or disobedient, according to his interest or inclination; can be at liberty to yield obedience when his favorite party is in power, and can wholly set at nought every obligation when his candidate is defeated. Such is the deplorable disloyalty manifested by many who claim to be Union men. Such is the sentiment of the peace party at the North, and the multitudes in the Border

States who have taken the oath of allegiance to obtain Federal protection. But this is nothing but disunion manifested by those who are too cowardly to fight for a principle; and is just as hurtful, and infinitely more contemptible, than that open rebellion which the enemy in arms manifests. A grain of common sense shows that we cannot separate between our rulers and the state, saying that we owe all allegiance to the latter and none to the former. Until any officer has been superseded by his rightful successor, he is our magistrate, and the visible representative of the only power on earth to which we owe allegiance; and whether we approve all his acts or not, we must obey, unless his commands manifestly contravene the law of God, and it is at our peril if we disobey.

Now, if these things be true at all, that loyalty is a virtue, but resistance to lawfully constituted authority a crime of most aggravated character, then *a fortiori* at such a crisis as the present, it behooves us to unite in the cordial support of those whom God has placed over us, even though they, in their efforts to subdue our common enemies, may have encroached on some of our cherished rights; for, as before said, government is a system of compensations by which conflicting interests are united when all is at peace; of course, it follows that in war each man must surrender more of his private interests, and sink his own individuality far more in the common good. There is no sacrifice which the state may not justly call him to make; and the same holds good of particular parts of country and bodies of people constituting the whole. These doctrines are irrefragably true if any system of government be maintained, and no opposition would be offered to them if they were promulgated in the abstract; but the special application of them to our own case is fraught with difficulties, because the conflicting interests of the few shut out from view the common good of the whole. To this, the greatest evil by far which now besets our political pathway, special attention is directed.

At the commencement of the present insurrection, the Government of the United States was called to legislate for a people of various political views, influenced by strongly conflicting interests, and holding to hostile institutions. Added to this, the party previously in power had been the vacillating but ever dishonest tool of those who had long been the advocates of secession; and in their interest had perverted the whole power of the nation, as well as wasted the resources of the people. There was a powerful faction arrayed against the incoming administration, which, having prejudged and determined to destroy it, was prepared by all kinds of misrepresentation to

influence the minds of the lukewarm by appealing to sectional prejudices and the jealousies arising from slavery ; so that, do or say what the Executive might, nothing could avail to allay suspicions, and satisfy the minds of traitors that the interests of the nation would be safe in his hands. To meet the expectations of honest men who differed on important issues was difficult ; to satisfy those determined to oppose, was impossible. All that could be done was to pursue an honest but determined policy ; one insuring not the gratification of a fractional minority of malcontents, nor the tame submission to the demands of an unpatriotic neutrality, nor yet the perfect affiliation with the extreme men who had aided in carrying the election, but a conservative course indicated by the wishes of every true patriot. Such, there can be no doubt, was the purpose of the President ; such, at least, the avowed intention of one who, by the course he has pursued, has extorted from many who admired him least the admission that he is honest and patriotic. Who, now, at this stage of our national troubles, doubts for a moment that had the secessionists laid down their arms and quietly submitted to lawful authority, all the guaranteed rights of the states would have remained intact, and Mr. Lincoln would have administered the government with fidelity, exhibiting a due regard to the interests of the whole people ? But when the malcontents raised the standard of revolt ; when the plot was laid to assassinate the legitimate choice of the people, seize the capital with the archives of the nation, and on the ruins of lawfully constituted authority erect the creature of mob violence, and thus utterly destroy our free institutions ; then nothing remained but for the President to defend the Government, as well as his own rights, by summoning to his aid all the forces which the Constitution and the common sense of self-preservation put at his disposal. As the head of the nation he could do no less, except he were the veriest poltroon in the land ; yet for this he has been centured without stint by a venal press in our midst, and, as was to be expected, by the enemies of freedom abroad. Traitors in the North have vied with their friends in the South in reviling the President for that which the first law of nature dictates.

But it is deserving our closest attention that when the President called for help, he did not first turn to the radicals of his party, but to the conservatives of the whole country ; and the policy which he tenaciously held was not that of extreme men ; so that those of moderate views had it in their power, by rallying to his help, to have had the war conducted on those principles which they advocate, and which Mr. Lincoln had con-

stantly manifested. However, in default of this support, which we in the border states, as well as the conservative men throughout the country, denied him, he was forced further to the extreme of his party than he evidently desired to go; for every public man, and especially in a crisis, must have the support of a powerful and well-agreed constituency; no lukewarm and vacillating helpers, but those who will give themselves and all they possess for the cause they maintain. The supporters of Mr. Lincoln have therefore been almost exclusively those who affiliated with the Republican party; who, while most of them did not desire that slavery, though doubtless the real cause of the war, should be made the turning-point of its continuance, could nevertheless feel no desire to fight for its perpetuity. Nor was this feeling strange. For it must be borne in mind that the great majority of our people from the days of our independence, in common with most Christian nations, looked upon the institution as a moral, social, and economical evil; and while it had a recognized status by the law of the land, this was effected at the time we became a separate nation, through fear that the agitation of the subject might prevent the cordial union of all the states. But our people had always looked forward to the time when this stigma on our free institutions could, by all lawful and proper means, be destroyed. For it is perfectly clear from their words and acts, that the political fathers of our country, even those in the South—such as Washington, Jefferson and Henry—were wont to speak in such terms of the institution as would, in the days when chivalry was in full bloom, have branded their authors with the name of abolitionist, and caused a sudden appreciation in the price of pitch and feathers.

Nor can we blink the fact that most of our political trouble, from the day we became a nation, have arisen from the relations of slavery to the government; so that it is not the least strange that those who were careless as to its continuance, providing it did not carry its disturbing influences beyond its sectional boundaries, should look with an evil eye upon its existence, now that it is exhibited prominently as the destroyer of our peace. Doubtless wrong has often been intended by the abolitionists, and such wrongs as were keenly felt by us in the border states. While this was extremely distasteful to us as an interference with our vested rights, the most we could say was, that this was generally the result of individual madness and folly, as the deplorable John Brown raid; or, at most, the agitation of newspapers to make electioneering capital, and the unfriendly legislation of individual states. For the General

Government has always, before this outbreak, been jealous of our rights, has invariably shown an accommodating spirit toward our wishes, not to say a truckling obsequiousness to our constantly increasing demands and arrogancy. The Supreme Court had in fact become so completely subsidized to the interests of slavery, since the death of Chief Justice Marshall, that we could get any decision we desired. We could carry slavery into all the territories (the only real plea for secession ever offered,) at the very time the war begun; so that, so far as the Government was concerned, we had nothing of which we could complain. It is true, we could not compel our brethern in the North to love and cherish the peculiar institution; we could not make all our own people, either the laboring classes or the more intelligent, believe precisely as our political leaders would have us in the divinity of the system. We cannot reasonably expect, therefore, that a system, which from the first depended on sufferance for its existence, and which had been the source of so much political acrimony, when it had, in the estimation of the majority of our people, continued its encroachments until it produced insurrection, could be otherwise than hated by those who came from the free states to fight our battles. As reasonable men, therefore, we must bear these facts in mind when we account for the course which the Government has been compelled to take since it was assailed, and had to call the people to its relief. If it be replied that the assumption of slavery being the cause of the war is a false one, this avails nothing against the argument. For a deep-seated conviction, whether true or false, is equally strong in influencing human conduct; and when a belief is universal we must take it into account in all matters which it influences, even though we can prove its falsity.

We must likewise remember, when a nation becomes implicated in colossal difficulties, it is closely scrutinized by its neighbors. Hence, while free from trouble, it might pursue its course regardless of friend or enemy, without much danger; yet, when on trial for existence, it must pay some deference to the moral convictions of civilized nations. For if all things do not move on in harmony with the sense of justice obtaining among neighboring governments, other powers may interfere in the internal policy of the one jeopardized by civil strife. As no man can live entirely by himself, so neither can a community or nation. Nothing was more dreaded by our people at the commencement of the civil war than foreign interference, and such fear was not without reason. For those European States with which we had most intercourse, having abolished African

slavery in their own dominions, had been officious in their zeal that we should follow their example, and showed an unmistakable hostility to us for refusing. This was often far more the result of hostility to us than of moral sentiment or desire for the welfare of the parties concerned; so that when our domestic troubles seemed fair to make us an easy prey to their power, there was every reason to apprehend trouble from this source. Now, if we take the tone of the foreign press and statesmen which are truly friendly to us as a criterion, we may safely hazard the assertion that Mr. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, however distasteful it be to loyal slaveholders, has done more to gain favor for us among foreigners, and ward off from us the intervention of England and France, than all other political measures together. For the sentiments of those nations are determinedly hostile to slavery; and however unfriendly those powers themselves are to us, yet the sympathy of the common people with the emancipation movement has rendered it impossible for the governments to take part with those who, in the words of Alexander Stephens, make slavery the cornerstone of their political fabric.

These considerations have doubtless had their weight with the President in shaping his emancipation policy, and the wonder is that all combined have not given a greater preponderance than they have. Nothing but the most unflinching integrity, combined with the tenderest regard for the rights of loyal men in the Slave States, could have prevented more aggressive movements on the part of the Executive. For, however startling the measures advocated in several of Mr. Lincoln's proclamations appear to us, we are too prone to look at them as something which has occurred in time of peace, when there was no pressure brought to bear upon him by the necessities of the hour. We should contemplate them from a war stand-point; as something which the military condition seemed at least to the Government to demand, in order, by every available means, and at the least sacrifice of life and treasure, to weaken the power of the enemy. We moreover forget that these measures were not intended to injure Union men, since provision is made for their indemnification when their property is taken; that traitors only are sought to be weakened; and in truth, are the only ones permanently affected. But in our zeal lest our rights be invaded, we assume as our own the wounds inflicted on the disloyal; forgetting the labors and dangers of our friends, while commiserating the punishment which traitors have brought upon themselves while essaying to compass our destruction. If our attention was more fixed on the great interests of our Govern-

ment now jeopardized, and our sympathies brought into livelier action for the sufferings which this unholy rebellion has brought upon the defenders of freedom; if all would acquiesce more heartily in the punishments which befall secessionists, as the natural outworking of their own wicked schemes, and reserve our complaints against the President for invading our rights while this is merely prospective, it is clear that we would act more the part of patriots, and sooner witness the entire subversion of treason.

But to advance one step farther. Suppose our institutions have been trampled upon in some degree by the General Government, and we are actually in danger of losing part of the rights we once enjoyed. Admit that the people of the North are not willing to accord to us the immunities which the laws of our common country grant to slave property, still it does not follow that we alone suffer, or indeed more than our neighbors across the river, in any other sense than as being made the theater of hostilities. This is surely a great grievance, but arises solely from our geographical position added to our complication with the prime cause of the war. The status of the whole country must be changed by a contest of such magnitude, and it is idle for us to expect our condition to remain the same after this universal commotion. Immense amounts of wealth are always destroyed in war, which are so much capital taken from the industrial resources of the country, and the people must be impoverished to that extent. This may, it is true, be represented mostly by the Government debt; but however it be expressed, there is as much less property in the country as has been consumed by waging war; and this sum will make itself be felt in our future condition in the form of increased taxation. From the greater amount of productive capital in the North, this must chiefly be met there. Accordingly, while all loyal people must feel the pecuniary burdens growing out of the war, we may expect to suffer with them. But if we experience losses in our slave property, our case is not singular, for the Government takes away forcibly from all loyal citizens the means to support the war, which, so far as can be seen, would never have arisen except for the existence of that species of property we feel to be peculiarly endangered. And it should ever be remembered whence this danger has arisen. For if the South had been content with the guarantees which the forbearance of men in the convention of 1787 gave to the institution, and which subsequent legislation had continually strengthened, no occasion would have arisen requiring interference. We in Kentucky and other Border States suffered far

more than those farther south from hostility to slavery, yet we were satisfied with our condition; well knowing that our peculiar institution was unpopular with our northern neighbors, and with their sentiments toward it our slaves could not be wholly secure. But the Congress of the United States, as if to take away every ground of complaint, and calm every fear for the future, passed, by an overwhelming majority, a resolution effectually guaranteeing perpetual immunity from interference on the part of the General Government; so that there was in this respect again no excuse nor specious pretext for the secession movement. So we see that it is secession which has brought all the danger upon us; and if we complain, let us bestow our grumbling on the proper party. But now that the war has been inaugurated by the traitors, it brings incalculable evils on all parts of our country, so that, in an economical point of view, the debt entailed upon us, even if the war be closed this year, will not fall short of two thousand million dollars; three-fourths of which will have to be paid by those who were opposed to slavery, and derived no direct advantage therefrom. This sum, to be paid by those who did not participate in the institution, is sufficient to buy every slave in the country, paying the enormous rate of five hundred dollars per caput. Why, then, we repeat, should our people murmur so loudly if they do lose their slave property? It is, to say the most, no more valuable than any other kind. Or, if we must find vent to our sense of wrong, why not against those who forced the Government to engage in a war, the effect of which, with any method of conducting it, must be to endanger the status of slave property, as all civil wars have a tendency to do. We should, then, if the alternative comes, as good patriots, submit to those measures which our Executive has tried earnestly and perseveringly to avoid, but which the sentiments of the great body of the loyal people, or the exigencies of the times, may force him reluctantly to take. It is a fact strangely overlooked by our Union friends in the North, and their armies who come to fight our enemies, that there are many thoroughly loyal men who are pro-slavery from sentiment. Such men cannot understand why they should be made scapegoats for the sins of secessionists. For in the midst of persecutions, at a time when it cost a man something to stand up for the Union, they have held firm, and given themselves and their sons to fight for their only acknowledged country. They cannot understand why they, who have always opposed the traitorous movements of the fire-eaters, should now be included in an indiscriminate proscription, as is frequently done by thoughtless and wicked men who come to our State

fully possessed of the idea that there are no loyal men here. While these are great and just grievances, we ought to remember that such conduct is not by the order of the Government, nor countenanced by it; but war turns loose many lawless men, who are only too glad for an opportunity to run riot with those passions which the restraints of peace kept chained. Besides, if others forget that we are loyal, we must never ourselves forget that fact; and therefore it behooves us to submit to the losses and endure the abuses which we sometimes suffer; for while undeserved and grievous, they are still of the same kind which all who maintain the cause of the Union have to endure. Hence, if called to suffer still more in the subjugation of the enemy, and surrender, as the result of a military necessity, (the only case we are satisfied in which this can occur,) our rights in slave property secured to us by the faith of our Government, it by no means follows that we ought to prove recreant to our country, which did protect us in all our rights while in its power to do so, when, through necessity growing out of the present crisis, it invades any of our institutions. The only case where the Executive has done anything to which true men could object, or where there is any ground of apprehension in the future, is that where slave property is involved. After we have poured out our treasure like water; after we have surrendered our homes to be desolated by war; after we have given our sons without grudging to lay down their lives, shall we falter? Shall we hesitate to yield that which has been the cause of our troubles; which the civilization of the world disapproves; and which we as emancipationists would be glad to get rid of? Surely we are not prepared, as the disunionists are, to accommodate the language of a noted secessionist—*Skin for skin, all a man hath will he give for his—nigger!*

It is sincerely to be hoped that the General Government will never present the issue of taking away the slaves of loyal men. On the contrary, we trust that the President and his advisers, by attending to that which seems to us their legitimate duty, will be able to end the war successfully, and let us manage our municipal affairs in the way which seems good to us, and which we at least think we understand far better than our neighbors. But if the alternative be presented to yield to interference or turn against our country, and give our aid to those whose principles we hate, and who have plunged us into all our evils, the course for us is plain. It would, perhaps, be very humbling to our pride, and certainly unjust to our patriotism; but preferable to treason, and in the end more satisfactory. For while as patriots we had better suffer wrong than to be

guilty of injustice, so also, as a matter of pure selfishness, it is better to permit the Government to do that which, if it does at all, will do reluctantly to us as friends, and therefore with some regard to our prejudices and interests, than, by becoming enemies, compel it to do the same by violence. For we are all well assured the Government will triumph, whichever way we go, and it will thoroughly accomplish all it finds necessary to the complete subjugation of its enemies; so that our only safe as well as loyal course lies in obedience. Moreover, no man who is not blind can fail to see that slavery is destined to perish as one result of this insurrection. The secessionists see and acknowledge now what Union men in and out of the Border States foretold would be the effect of their mad course. In the words of the *Richmond Whig*: "Slavery has sinned against itself; it has bitten itself to death; it has committed the unpardonable sin, and must die the death." Now this being acknowledged as the inevitable consequence, (and brought about by the insurgents themselves,) what can it avail the Border States to hold on to this system to their own undoing? Why should that which must die out of natural decay as soon as there is a cordon of free States all around, be made the condition of traitorous affiliation with our common enemy? By holding on to our Government, we may safely cross the stream of civil war; but if for the shadow of slavery we let go what we have, and plunge madly after our *rights*, we will lose all, and be lost ourselves. Added to this, it has been, as before shown, the desire of good and thoughtful men, even from our earliest history, to get rid of the institution by emancipation. For it is, to say the least, a social evil, a great disadvantage to the white race, as retarding the development of industrial resources; and degrading to labor by raising unnatural distinctions in society. There is very little doubt, that, could a vote have been taken on the merits of the question, without intimidation or bribery by the slave interest, and without our jealousies being inflamed by outside interference, the lawful voters of every Border Slave State would have favored gradual emancipation. It is certainly true that this sentiment is strong in these States; and this change is looked forward to by the better class of men as one which is very desirable, and which must soon have taken place, despite the bolstering up of worn-out politicians and a truckling press, even had secession not hastened it. So that it practically resolves itself into the time and manner of doing the work. But we hold that in both respects it is far better for the General Government to let us do our own work in the way our judgment dictates, both for the sake of master and servant. For the

violent changes of society are always attended with evil to all parties concerned; a fact which the anti-slavery party in the North leave entirely out of view, and appear to consider nothing more to be necessary than universal and instant emancipation; whereas, when this is *un fait accompli*, then the real difficulties of the case are just begun. Those negroes which the Government has already freed as the necessary result of the progress of the war, are more than can be provided for, as is witnessed by the terrible sufferings of this class, despite the assistance rendered from every quarter; and as the work of subjugating the traitors progresses, the master will run from, and the slave toward, the Union armies, until the entire servile population of the seceded States will require protection. To carry on the war successfully, and provide for the wants of those who fall into the Federal lines, is a task quite as large as the Government appears to be able to accomplish. However, if it be in any way necessary for crushing the rebellion that we suffer the inconvenience of a hasty and violent change, we must yield; and it is expedient for us, in view of our present situation, as well as the part of loyalty, to do so cheerfully and heartily. For if our friends in the Northern States are willing, in order to crush out a rebellion which *they* believe was caused by slavery alone, to saddle themselves with three-fourths of a debt of two thousand million dollars, and give a million and a half from the flower of their youth, we ought certainly, for the preservation of our country united, yield up that which has always been a distracting influence, and is in itself of doubtful expediency.

Such are some of the duties of loyal men growing out of our present condition, viewed with reference to our relations to the General Government on the one hand and slavery on the other. There are other duties more specific in kind, but more general in application, the consideration of which is equally pertinent to the times, but which are too often neglected by those professing themselves to be patriots. It is a self-evident truth that no government can be infallible; and hence, with the best intentions on the part of rulers, blunders and wrongs will be frequently committed, and that these are to be pardoned on the general ground of the infirmity which clings to all things human. So long as the legislator conserves the rights committed to his keeping with ordinary integrity, his minor defects are to be pardoned and concealed. In our democratic policy we have the oft-recurring and easy remedy of popular elections, if our public servants betray their trusts; and the danger is rather in the frequency of the change, and unbridled licentious-

ness of condemnation, than in tyrannical impunity. It is far from being the purpose to advocate the screening of public servants when they jeopard our welfare; but it is necessary to be faithful to them while their purposes are right in the main. In peace these things can regulate themselves, and our liberties are quite as safe, being guarded by the Argus eyes of party, as the good name of our rulers is from unwarranted attacks. But when our country is involved, as at this time, in a struggle calling for the resources of the nation, the united energies of the people are required for the undivided support of our Government battling for its existence. Party spirit must then be dropped, names forgotten, and side issues neglected in meeting the overwhelming dangers which threaten. For at such a time there ought to be but one party, but one interest; and can be, except at our peril, but an homologous and undivided counsel. All that contributes to this result adds to the strength of the nation; all that opposes does but distract the counsels and weaken the chances for success. But in this hour of trial we find multitudes, both North and South, who cannot rise above the mists of a groveling party selfishness, nor see in our present stupendous struggle anything more than an ordinary political contest. And because they possess no patriotism themselves, they cannot credit the Government with any; and all its acts which do not quadrate with their own narrow selfishness are denominated tyrannical, because measured by their own traitorous standards.

This kind of opposition manifests itself under protean shapes, but usually can be reduced to two or three kinds. Of these the most common is the pretended danger of the Constitution from the encroachments of military power. The most blatant defenders of the inviolability of this instrument, those whose eyes have long been a fountain of tears, whose sorrow refuses to be comforted, appear to have made Richmond, Virginia, their especial haunt. From this precious nest of traitors we have had jeremiads which sounded like the wailings for a first born, "lest that time-honored document, the Constitution of the United States, might be endangered by that tyrant enthroned at Washington, and his hireling minions." One would think from the earnestness wherewith they lamented its supposed desecration, they were the special conservators of our palladium of liberty. But all these traitors really desired was to have the exclusive monopoly of rending the Constitution into a thousand fragments. Whatever they did, whether it be to steal the public property, to destroy the Government, and kill without mercy all who stood up for the country of their

fathers, was right and constitutional; but the moment measures were taken for their punishment, either in person or estate, then, lo! the Constitution was violated; and they its very loyal supporters were very much alarmed lest *they should be punished*. This sore lamentation of the traitors at Richmond was immediately taken up in heart-rending notes, by all in sympathy with treason throughout the country, and one might justly suppose from the frequency and persistency wherewith secession sympathizers spoke of maintaining the inviolability of this instrument, that its guardians were numerous enough and sufficiently vigilant to defend it from all injury. But these same persons think it quite consistent with their loud pretensions to daily violate the oath they have taken to the Federal power; to aid the enemy by men and money; to refuse to support our armies engaged in suppressing an insurrection; and to openly express a desire for secession to succeed in dismembering and destroying our country. Out on such hypocritical regard for the Constitution. Away with all such fears lest Mr. Lincoln transcends his prerogatives when punishing those in manifest sympathy with rebellion. When we find any one exceedingly exercised lest some scoundrel be abridged of the liberty to utter treason, we are compelled to think "there is something rotten in Denmark," that is in the devotion which such men profess for the Constitution, and have no difficulty in telling the extent of his loyalty. For when any traitor like Vallandigham is cut short in his coöperation with the enemy, then a great hue and cry is raised that personal liberty is endangered. But personal liberty to do what? To raise and encourage insurrection; to resist the Government in its efforts to preserve its own existence; for what else did he desire, whither else did all his efforts tend? What influence do such men as Fernando Wood and Governor Seymour exert save to play into the hands of our common enemy? If we desire proof of this, take the utterances of the Southern press, which always speak of these men as their friends; and show that the hope of ultimate triumph is based largely on the diversions which such disaffected leaders make against the Government. Moreover, we see unmistakably that our enemies abroad look to such miscreants as the means of weakening and finally destroying our Union. That mendacious publication, *Blackwood's Magazine*, which is clearly and unequivocally secession in its sympathies (not that it loves the South any better than the North; but sees in the success of the former the ruin of both), utters precisely the same slanders against our rulers and their supporters, that our home traitors and their brethren in the South continually employ.

None cried out more lustily to be let alone than those wretches who began the war by firing on the starving garrison at Fort Sumter, unless it be the cowardly sneaks among us who were in sympathy. So fearful were they lest the Constitution might be endangered by Mr. Lincoln's call for volunteers, and thus sedition punished, that they would suffer its utter overthrow by an armed enemy in front, and the peace man in the rear. Surely this is straining out the gnat and swallowing the camel. But who that is truly patriotic, that wishes to see our Government succeed in crushing this rebellion, has suffered by the suspension of the habeas corpus act? Every true man is safe; and traitors in arms and their cowardly sympathizers deserve nothing but the gibbet, or the prison until they submit. Some, however, urge that while it is right for those who among us aid treason to be punished, yet this being provided for in a legal way, the military power should not interfere with the civil administration; but offenders should be tried by the regular courts and suffer the legitimate punishments. But those who utter such sentiments are either very silly or very treacherous. As well might Jeff. Davis be arraigned before the United States District Court for the District of Virginia, as Vallandigham before the court for the Southern District of Ohio. Here, among his own sympathizers (whom we know to be generally as disloyal as any man in South Carolina), with the right of challenging the jurymen, he could never be convicted; for care would be taken to have a packed jury; and the result would be either acquittal or prolongation of the suit indefinitely. Everybody knows this perfectly, and therefore the remedy proposed is simply none at all. It is absurd to think that the Government is to be left without any resource, the sport of its enemies and the scorn of its friends. If courts and the ordinary administration of the Constitution be sufficient, wherefore do we resort to arms? Send Chief Justice Taney, under a flag of truce, to Richmond to try Jeff. Davis for treason. Choose Benjamin for prosecuting attorney, with Humphrey Marshall and Wigfall for the defense. Empanel a jury from the persons who represent Kentucky and Tennessee in the Southern Congress. Let the Constitution, as interpreted by those who have trampled it under foot, reign in all its glory, and then we would have traitors' carnival. But if we find this not to work well, and send our Grants and Bankses to try the traitors at Chattanooga and New Orleans, where is the difference if we send Burnside armed with "No. 38" to Dayton, Ohio. We certainly have the same right to fight the enemy at home as abroad; in Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky,

as in Virginia or Tennessee; and, if need be, with the same weapons. For it is plain that the enemy put themselves out of the reach of the constitutional remedy in both places, either by annulling it or placing a false construction on its provisions; and whenever it is found insufficient in application, then we must resort to the arbitrament of the sword. It would be strange, indeed, if a people made an instrument like the laws of the Medes and Persians, unalterable; and then when found inadequate to preserve the life of that people for whom it was formed, they must die politically; because, while able to save themselves by new expedients found suited to the exigencies of the occasion, they must, *nolens volens*, hold fast to that which is unable to deliver them. Mariners are often compelled to throw out part of the cargo, or even the ship's tackling in the midst of a storm, to save themselves and the vessel; or even abandon the ship itself when stranded among the breakers, and escape by swimming to the shore. The people were before the Constitution, and are therefore above it, on the principle that the man who built the house is greater than the house. They would survive if there were no constitution, and could form another. But where is the use of a Constitution if there is no people for it to govern? Self-preservation is the first law of Nature, and we are permitted to make use of all expedients to effect this, except to do wrong. What is true of individuals is equally true of nations; and no one but the traitors who have left their country for their country's good, and are waiting and watching over the border, or their equally guilty confreres who yet live by the lenity of our laws to sow discord among us, complain of martial law for doing that which the civil law in its ordinary application is inadequate to effect. Far be it from any true patriot to desire to see the ordinary forms of law neglected or the Constitution infringed. On the contrary, all loyal men look upon these as the bulwark of civil liberty, and deprecate the terrible necessity of resorting to the martial process. But at the same time the punishment of traitors by extraordinary means does not affect us with particular grief; and until patriotic men are endangered, of which, at the present writing, there is not the least apparent danger, we can see no special reason for condemning the President for the course he has taken. In fact we have more tears for the thousands of brave men who are starving in prisons at Richmond as the result of a violated Constitution; we are far more distressed for the multitudes of sick and wounded men languishing in hospitals; for the homes made desolate throughout our country; for the hosts of noble fellows who, amid the snows of winter and the showers

of summer, are fighting our common enemy, than for the apprehension and summary punishment of the sneaking cowards who are doing the work of their traitorous friends in the South. Truly loyal men will coöperate with the Government in punishing treason, whether by regular civil process or not. And indeed it is far better to save the life of a patient, even if this can not be done by rule, than that his death should occur though Hippocrates and Galen stood at the bedside.

The charge of venality and corruption is often brought against the Government as a sufficient pretext for our withdrawal from its support. Doubtless this is frequently a true charge—we have had corruptions under previous Presidents. Mr. Buchanan's administration was not above suspicion, though he had as his supporters nearly all those who blame the present one. We have had defaulters in times of peace; contractors who made fortunes by swindling the Government; and such is likely to be the case to some extent in all places and times until the race of politicians is made of new material. If this cannot be avoided in peace, much less can it be in war; for then the regular working of the laws is deranged so that bad men can do their mischief and escape detection. Without the most manifest injustice this cannot be charged to the fault of the Administration, unless it connives at abuses, nor in any condition be made a justification of disloyalty. We well know that officials in high places have been summarily ejected for their complicity in fraud; and the searching examinations made daily in every branch of service give assurance that corrupt men will not be tolerated after discovery. If we were justified in standing aloof for such a cause, then surely there could be no patriotism in any land. But we forget that there was an Arnold in the Revolution. The English when villifying our Government for venality do not seem to remember Marlborough and Bacon. The Russian dominion is most arbitrary in its sway, and summary in the execution of punishments for unfaithfulness in office; yet peculation and malfeasance were, during the Crimean war, manifested to an extent wholly unheard of among us. Our Executive and his chief advisers cannot justly be charged with lack of integrity in the management of the public funds; and if others who are trusted prove unfaithful, the employers should not be deserted; but it is rather the duty for those who discern the great abuses to rally to the support of the Administration, and by their honesty redeem us from our miseries. However, from the experience we have had with those who clamor most, when they once were in power, we do not desire to see their services accepted. Most of our depart-

ments have been managed with such wisdom during Mr. Lincoln's term as to deserve all praise, and have disarmed the slander of such as were not blind to justice. No prime minister of England had ever more perplexing tasks, or executed them with greater fidelity, than several of our secretaries of bureaus since the war began.

The charge which is constantly brought by disloyal persons against the present Administration, that it drags the war along in order to perpetuate its own existence, is an insinuation which carries falsehood on its very face. For the contrary course is so clearly the one to insure the lasting favor of the people, that if this war could be brought to a successful and speedy issue, Mr. Lincoln would at once secure for himself a position second only to that of Washington. Nothing in the gift of the American people would be too good for the President and his advisers who had brought us honorably and safely through this perilous war. On the contrary, the continuance of hostilities tries our patience, depletes our treasury, and destroys our best men. But we look for the struggle to be ended too soon. Few wars of half the magnitude have progressed as rapidly and successfully as this has done for the Federal arms. One year more such as the last, will utterly exhaust the resources of the secessionists. And yet this is a civil war, which is of all kinds the most tedious.

Even if the Government was guilty of great wrongs, greater than the opposition charge, it does not follow that it is the duty of the patriot to expose its misdeeds in such a way as to make capital for the enemy. The patriot may mourn in secret over the errors of that government he loves; and the more loyal he is the more will he lament its faults, as we grieve for the misdeeds of a friend just in proportion to the hold he possesses on our affections. The son who, when his father was on trial for his life, or his mother's good name jeopardized, would go into the court, or among the gossips at the street corners, and disclose every idle word and venial fault of which he has been cognizant in their conduct, would not be considered as possessing natural affection or common sense. Nature teaches us by the holiest instincts of the heart, to stand up for those we love through evil report, and help sustain the burdens which their follies and sins may have brought upon them. History gives us one very noteworthy instance to the contrary; but the curse which is supposed by many scriptural advocates of African slavery to have followed the descendants of the offender, does not give much encouragement for us to follow the example if we have regard to the welfare of our posterity. But the son who went back-

wards that he might not see the shame of his father, and then threw the covering to hide the exposure from others, received a blessing; not that he approved the sin of drunkenness, not that he would encourage its repetition; but because the one guilty was his parent, and as a son he was jealous of his honor. So let us take warning for the guidance of our conduct, since our country is far more to us than the welfare of a father or the honor of a mother, however precious these be to every true son, as Socrates has well expressed: "Are you so wise as not to know that a man's country is more precious, more venerable and sacred, and in greater estimation both among gods, and men that have sense, than mother, and father, and all other progenitors; and that one ought to reverence, yield to, and soothe one's country when angry, rather than one's father, and either persuade it or do what it orders; and to suffer quietly, if it bids one suffer, whether to be beaten or put in bonds; or if it sends one to battle, to be wounded or slain; this must be done, for it is just; and one must not give back, or retreat, or leave his post; but that both in war, and in the civil court, and everywhere, one must do what his city and country enjoins, or persuade it in the way justice allows."—*Plato, Crito*, 51 *B. C.*

There are, in truth, only two parties in our country, the Unionists and the Secessionists; there can be no middle ground, and those who are not for us in this struggle are against us. Hence, every act and word which weakens the hands of our rulers in their attempt to subdue our enemies, does but strengthen the foe. This can be done in no way more effectually than by withdrawing the moral support which a good name affords. It is therefore vain for any to say they are Union men, as may be heard any day among the copperheads of the North, or of this State, and at the same time perpetually attack the Government in all its measures. Those persons who say so much to the disparagement of the loyal Government that they must, from time to time, make public proclamations that they are Union men in order for that fact to be even suspected, and make vehement asseverations of their patriotism as a kind of salvo for continual expressions of disloyalty—surely from such friends may the republic pray to be delivered.

Closely connected with the foregoing in effect, if not always in animus, is the class of croakers, who are perpetually prophets of evil—birds of ill omen, who, whether they rise up on the right hand or the left, true to their native instincts, fly toward the South. We do not mean trimmers, who are precisely what the company is; who are for the Union or for Secession

according to the prospects of the political horizon. These have no claim to loyalty, but it is a happy thought that they are harmless; for though, like the drone bee, they make a great fuss, yet they have no sting. Such persons are no help to either party, for they are too cowardly to fight, and too weak to have any weight in counsel. They try to please all, and therefore are trusted by none. But this is not the class meant. It is that one composed of those unfortunates who see nothing but disaster, where others see victory; who would not fight, (not that they lack the courage, but) because they feel certain beforehand they would be whipped; who always have bad news, and rise up before day to tell it; and then, if it be subsequently contradicted, forget to make the proper correction. Such persons magnify each advantage of the enemy into a decisive victory, and belittle every success of our arms till it vanishes into air. When news of different sorts comes they have "three ears" to hear the bad, but are deaf as the adder to the report of the good. And the same dispositions makes them seers for the future. While continually uttering prophesies of adversity, of course something, from time to time, does, according to their fancy, prove true; and straightway they wear the hairy garment to deceive. Such persons gather around them those of like feelings, and weaken each other's courage until they utterly despair of the Republic; for the native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er by their pale cast of thought. Sometimes this rabies assumes the higher forms of criticism, and we have elaborate and, without exception, unfavorable dissertations on civil and military matters. For these critics feel themselves so thoroughly able to guide the State and hound on the dogs of Mars, that they are "the men;" and because they are likely to die without their sagacity being appreciated, the state will assuredly perish, since "wisdom will die with them." Such persons are so wise that they know by intuition more than others do by long years of persevering study; and much like the Greek sophists, are able to speak equally well on all subjects. They proclaim with the most complacent certainty that our generals are all fools, and our cabinet officers numskulls. While our foreign relations have been conducted with so much prudence, amid many vexatious and dangerous complications, as to extort praise from inimical publicists of Europe; while our currency has been so successfully managed as to astonish us all, these critics go on berating our Government advisers without limit: never seeming to remember that their foolish predictions of a year ago have been utterly falsified by subsequent facts. If such would altogether hold their peace, this, at least, would prove their wisdom.

Such persons are far more injurious than if they were in the ranks fighting against us. For if they were with the foe, unless their nature was entirely changed, they would spread dismay by their lugubrious vaticinations and disparaging criticisms. Possibly a man of this character may be loyal, but surely his loyalty is not of the kind to inspire confidence in the times which try men's souls. That loyalty which is worth the name never despairs. It accepts every vigorous measure against the enemy as an augury of good; supports the Government in matters of doubtful expediency, even for the sake of avoiding divided counsels; and forsake not the legitimate ruler because through frailty he may do wrong, or not achieve that measure of success hoped for. It considers the labors and perplexities, the anxieties and watchings which distract those high in authority; and affords honor and sympathy corresponding to their trials. It rises equal to the occasion, and if darkness surrounds, it can by its own faith strike out a light to dispel the gloom. That loyalty never doubts since it believes its cause right, and that God will maintain the right; and because he can save by many or few—this, and this alone, is worthy the name of patriotism—this, and this alone, revives the drooping spirits after defeat, and prevents the relaxation of sloth after victory.

THE NEGROES AND THE WAR.

IMPORTANT LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT.

The following noble letter from President Lincoln appears in a correspondence published in the Frankfort (Kentucky) *Commonwealth*:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON,
April 4, 1864.

A. G. HODGES, ESQ., Frankfort, Ky.,

MY DEAR SIR:—You ask me to put in writing the substance of what I verbally said, the other day, in your presence, to Governor Bramlette and Senator Dixon. It was about as follows:

I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel.

And yet, I have never understood that the Presidency conferred upon me an unrestricted right to act officially upon this judgment and feeling. It was in the oath I took, that I would to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. I could not take the office without taking the oath. Nor was it my view, that I might take an oath to get power, and break the oath, in using the power. I understood, too, that, in ordinary civil administration, this oath even forbade me, to practically indulge my primary, abstract judgment on the moral question of slavery. I had publicly declared this many times, and in many ways. And I aver that, to this day, I have done no official act in mere deference to my abstract judgment and feeling on slavery.

I did understand, however, that my oath to preserve the Constitution to the best of my ability, imposed upon me the duty of preserving, by every indispensable means, that Government—that Nation, of which that Constitution was the organic law. Was it possible to lose the Nation, and yet preserve the Constitution?

By general law, life and limb must be protected; yet often a limb must be amputated to save a life; but a life is never wisely given to save a limb. I feel that measures, otherwise unconstitutional, might become lawful, by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the Constitution, through the preservation of the Nation. Right or wrong, I assumed this ground, and now avow it. I could not feel that to the best of my ability I had even tried to preserve the Constitution, if to save slavery or any minor matter, I should permit the wreck of Government, Country and Constitution, all together. When early in the war General Fremont attempted military emancipation, I forbade it because I did not then think it an indispensable necessity. When a little later, General Cameron, then Secretary of War, suggested the arming of the blacks, I objected, because I did not yet think it an indispensable necessity. When, still later, General Hunter attempted military emancipation, I again forbade it, because I did not yet think the indispensable necessity had come.

When, in March, and May, and July, 1862, I made earnest and successive appeals to the Border States, to favor compensated emancipation, I believed the indispensable necessity for military emancipation, and arming the blacks would come, unless averted by that measure. They declined the proposition, and I was, in my best judgment, driven to the alternative, of either surrendering the Union, and with it the Constitution, or of laying strong hand upon the colored element. I chose

the latter. In choosing it, I hoped for greater gain than loss ; but of this I was not entirely confident. More than a year of trial now shows no loss by it, in our foreign relations ; none in our home popular sentiment ; none in our white military force—no loss by it any how or any where. On the contrary, it shows a gain of quite a hundred and thirty thousand soldiers, seamen and laborers. These are palpable facts, about which, as facts, there can be no caviling. We have the men, and we could not have had them without the measure.

And now, let any Union man, who complains of the measure, test himself, by writing down in one line, that he is for subduing the rebellion by force of arms, and in the next, that he is for taking these hundred and thirty thousand men from the Union side, and placing them where they would be, but for the measure he condemns. If he cannot face his cause so stated, it is only because he cannot face the truth.

I add a word which was not in the verbal conversation. In telling this tale I attempted no compliment to my own sagacity. I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me. Now, at the end of three years' struggle, the Nation's condition is not what either party or any man devised or expected. God alone can claim it. Whither it is tending seems plain. If God now wills the removal of a great wrong, and wills also, that we of the North, as well as you of the South, shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new cause to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God.

Yours truly,

A. LINCOLN.

